

1Interviewee: Philip Estermann

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6Project: Island Movers & Shakers of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

7Interview Team: Carol Bain, Rhea Palma

8

9Recording #1

10[ 0:00:47.2] Snap, followed by adjustments to setup

11[0:01:08.0]

12RP: Thank you, Phil, for being here today, and participating in our project. And I'd like to start with  
13your full name, what year you were born, and where you were born.

14PE: My full name is Philip Estermann, middle initial I for Irwin. I have no idea why that middle name I  
15was given. I have no idea. Anyway, my initials are P-I-E. (laughs). I was born in 1942, July 1942 in  
16Minneapolis, Minnesota.

17RP: Can you tell me a little bit about your family life?

18PE: Yes, I have (three) two brothers. I'm the middle son and my parents grew up in Minnesota. They're  
19of Swiss extraction on my father's side, German on my mother's side. And they grew up in central  
20Minnesota in a rural area, and after I was born in Minneapolis, when I was three years old, we moved  
21back to that area. So, I grew up in a small farm town of about 300 people.

22RP: What did you like most or impressed you when you look back at that life?

23PE: It was great for a kid in that location. There was a little river that ran through town, so I did a lot of  
24fishing. We hunted, we used .22's to go out and hunt. It was... we just roamed the town.

25RP: It was a good place to explore.

26PE: It was ...yes. You could just go anywhere. So, it was great. Great for a kid growing up that way.

27RP: Then you're family moved, left Minnesota altogether.

28PE: Right. We moved down to St. Paul for a few months, then moved out to California, to Modesto,  
29California in 1952 when I was 10 years old. And that was a huge shock. I had never ... that was my first  
30exposure to big city, and down in St. Paul and Minneapolis, and then going out to California, which had  
31a totally different pace of life.

32RP: Different culture.

33PE: It was very different culture.

34RP: Where did you go for high school and college?

35PE: I went... well, we lived in Modesto for a y ear. It was my sixth grade, seventh and eighth grade in  
36Fresno. And then we moved to Visalia where I went to high school, Mount Whitney High School. So I  
37was there for four years, starting my freshman year.

38RP: You did a lot of traveling in high school, how was that possible?

39PE: No, actually, my traveling came later, when I was in ... yeah, I went to the (Junior) Colleges of the  
40Sequoias my first year after high school in Visalia. And after that I went to the University of Redlands.  
41Also, I should say that during the summer before I went to Redlands, I went up to Berkeley for a six-  
42week experience called the Encampment for Citizenship, which was something that Eleanor Roosevelt  
43and other progressive people had created after WW II to bring people together and expose them to  
44liberal progressive ideas. And it was a great group conservative and liberal people, young people, but it  
45was ... all ethnic groups, as I recall. It was a great experience.

46 But I went to Redlands for my sophomore year, and then my junior year I had these opportunities to  
47travel abroad, so I went to Mexico in the fall semester and then I went to Europe in the spring semester.  
48So, I spent my entire junior year abroad, but in two locations. And then to continue that thread, I stayed  
49in Europe and worked for the summer ...

50[0:5:00.4]

51RP: What made you want to stay in Europe?

52PE: Well, I wanted to be international. I wanted to get out of the country. I wanted to learn about the rest  
53of the world. And I've looked back trying to figure out where I got that from, I think I got it from  
54somewhat from my dad who had during the depression had ridden trains, you know, hitchhiked on trains  
55out to California, you know. And he took our family to California, it was like a big step. And so I just ...  
56I guess I got an adventurous, sense of adventure from him a bit. But as a kid I read a lot, National  
57Geographic and so on about the rest of the world. And so, I wanted to go see it. So, when I was in  
58Europe, I just wanted to stay there as long as I could and make some money for the summer, and then I  
59took the next year off and hitchhiked around the world. Backpacking. I started in ... went down to Spain.  
60The guy that I'd worked for in Germany had a ... was building some homes in Spain along the coast  
61there and asked if I would kind of oversee them for a while. So, I went down there for a few weeks, and  
62then I went on to Morocco and hitchhiked across North Africa to Egypt and ... There's a whole story  
63there, I don't know if you want me to go into detail (laughs).

64RP: If we have time, maybe we will.

65PE: OK.

66RP: Was there anything important that came out of that, in particular, came out of that one year in  
67Europe in terms of your decisions in life to be involved in what you're involved in now?

68PE: Europe, I don't know. I was a history major in college, and so I was very much into reading about  
69European history. You know this was 1963, the spring semester from January to May or so of '63. And  
70still post-war period. The Berlin wall had just been built, and Cold War period. So, Europe was a very  
71interesting place at the time.

72RP: You were there when President Kennedy was assassinated.

73PE: Well, I was in Cairo, actually. I'd started backpacking in the fall of '63 in Morocco and went east  
74from there across North Africa and ended up in Egypt, and was in Cairo on November 22, 1963 when  
75Kennedy was assassinated. Very, very powerful experience ... because the Arab World took it very hard.  
76And yeah, they thought it was an Israeli conspiracy, which was current in the media, and so on. So, that  
77was ... the Middle East was very interesting. But they're incredibly friendly and hospitable people, the  
78Arabs are, and the Muslims in that part of the world. And it affected me greatly to be taken in so warmly  
79by them. I went from Egypt up to Beirut, Lebanon and went from there to Syria, Damascus, and down to  
80Amman, Jordan and to Jerusalem. In those days, the old Jerusalem was a split city and the old city was  
81in part of Jordan. So, I lived there during December, much of December and into January, and then went  
82east from there to Baghdad and Tehran and Isfahan and on into Pakistan, Quetta, and to Lahore, and then  
83across into India in late January. And Nepal, and then after that into Southeast Asia. Thailand,  
84Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, and then to the, a ship from Singapore by way of Saigon to Hong  
85Kong, and dropped off there for a few weeks, and then went on to Japan. And by that time I was out of  
86money (laughs), but I was lucky I got a job on a ship home and sailed back to the U.S. to New Orleans,  
87by way of the Panama Canal. So, it was a great trip. It was a life-changing trip, and it, you know, when I  
88started the trip I had to ask permission from my draft board to be away, because if you weren't in  
89college, you were susceptible to be drafted. And so, I wrote to them I guess the summer of '63 and said,  
90you know, this is what I had in mind and they gave me a one semester deferment and so I said "Well, I  
91write to you when I get to my next stop at the end of the year, which I think will be around Beirut, or  
92somewhere there." And I asked them as I was getting towards the end of that three or four-month period,  
93probably around November, I wrote to them again that I wanted to go on for another semester. And this  
94is a study tour, for me it really was educational. I did a lot of reading along the way, I was packing a  
95dozen or more books, paperback books in my backpack at different times just reading all along, history  
96and politics and so. And so I ... they gave me a deferment and they said I had to be back by May of '64.  
97And I made it. I got back in time and went back to school in the fall of '64, and spent my senior year at  
98Redlands.

99[0:10:50.3]

100RP: And you said it was life changing. So, perhaps you weren't a history major anymore. Did this sort  
101of change your academic focus?

102PE: It didn't change my academic focus, it enriched it. Yeah. As I said, I read a lot in that period. And  
103had great conversations along the way. But it makes you ... traveling like that is terrific. Nothing can  
104take the place of that because it exposes you to the diversity and complexity of life, and culture, and  
105religion, and just .... It changes your life! Because you know, it's like Peace Corp volunteers, they go  
106off and they live in and serve in the Peace Corp for two years, they come back and they can't relate it  
107very well to people who haven't had that experience. It's sort of like they're, they've been ... had a  
108unique experience, yeah.

109RP: And all this in your junior year of college.

110PE: Right. You know, I spent a lot of time thinking about it. What you see is utter poverty, you know, if  
111you travel. And even today, many more millions, hundreds of millions of people on earth now than there  
112were then. That was how many years ago? 1964, 40 ... well, in 2013 it'll be 50 years, right? So, yeah,  
113in fact I remember when I went back to India for the first time in about 1992—so that would have been  
114nearly 30 year period, I guess, from the time I'd been India. And the population had doubled in India  
115during that 30-year time. My recollection, it roughly doubled. So, the intent to the extent that the rest of  
116the globe ... has pockets that are just densely populated, people live in extreme poverty, they face  
117incredible survival challenges, and then registered profoundly on me.

118RP: So back at Redlands, how did you finish out your ...

119PE: Well, I finished my Bachelors degree in history. And at that point I had to decide what next? So, I  
120essentially had three options, I think a lot of people had at that time, or men did. Males did. You could  
121go to graduate school, you could go into the Peace Corp (this was the option that was interesting to me),  
122and/or you could go into the draft or go into the military to pick your military choice, if you didn't want  
123to risk being drafted. And I applied to both the Peace Corp and to graduate school. And the Peace Corp  
124said, they accepted me, said that we'd like to assign you to Nigeria. And then I got a fellowship to, also  
125was offered a fellowship to George Washington University in Washington, D.C. for international, public  
126and international affairs. And so I had two good choices there, and if I were to go into the Peace Corp, I  
127would have preferred to have gone to Asia as opposed to Africa. And the graduate fellowship offer from  
128George Washington University was very good, and I was interested in living in Washington, so that's  
129what I chose to do is to go back to Washington.

130RP: OK, and about what year was that?

131PE: That was the spring of '65.

132RP: I'm going to jump to 1966. You became an intern in the USAID Program in Vietnam. So, there's  
133your interest in Asia. How did you get involved in that?

134[0:15:06.4]

135PE: That was the second summer they offered that, and I it was ... I think it was AID's effort to try to  
136expose university students to what was going on in Vietnam. And in part, too, I think, too, to offset a lot  
137of the unrest and opposition to the Vietnam War on campus. So... a friend of mine, also from Redlands,  
138he had gone the preceding year, he was a Southeast Asia specialist and was in graduate school back in  
139Washington. And he went to Vietnam in the first year they did that in the summer of 1965. And while he  
140was gone, I moved back to Washington in June of '65 and took his place in his apartment while he was  
141in Vietnam. And so, I applied for it the next year and was selected and they had, my recollection is there  
142were 30 of us that went to Vietnam and 10 to Laos. So there was a cohort of 40, all told. It was excellent  
143because we had briefings in Washington before we left, and then we stopped, had briefings in Saigon  
144when we got there, and then we were dispersed throughout South Vietnam to different sites, and I ended  
145up in the highlands in Ban Me Thuot in Darlac Province up in the mountains. And had a really  
146interesting summer there doing community development work, helping build schools and dig wells and  
147things like that. It was an aid program, you know, to help the local community and government to do

148public works projects, community projects.

149RP: How long were you in that program?

150PE: It was three months. And I got to travel in Vietnam, as well, and traveled down to the south, into the  
151delta. We had a lot of freedom of movement, actually. And I went to visit friends near Danang and Thuy  
152Wa [?] who were doing ... friends from Washington who were involved in the research project there  
153studying refugee movement. And a result of that, I went to work with them the following year, came  
154back to Vietnam in 1967, doing again research on refugee movement. And my...we lived in a— Terry  
155Rambo and I—lived in a combined Special Forces and MACV camp, right on the edge of the mountains  
156west of Danang. Terry was doing research of one kind, I was developing a—I had written a questionnaire,  
157a different kind of questionnaire to administer to refugees in the area, trying to piece together sort of the  
158history of what had happened in that geographical area. And so we interviewed, in my project, we had  
159interviewers of Vietnamese students, college students who spoke good enough English that we could  
160communicate with them. And of course, then they'd do all the interviewing in Vietnamese and on the  
161basis of that I was sort of able to piece together what had happened in that area from about 1950 on or so  
162during the Viet Minh period when prior to 1954, and then after 1954 when the Viet Cong got organized  
163and so on. Well, they basically took over the countryside, or attempted to take over the countryside, and  
164these refugees were all there because the U.S. Military, the Marines with their Vietnamese counterparts  
165had invaded that area and there was fighting in there and around the villages. And so the villagers all  
166migrated to the district headquarters where we were located.

167RP: How did that end? You said the Tet offensive in 1968, and that program actually lost funding?

168PE: Well, yes. We were there in the summer and fall of '67 and then we went back to Washington and  
169were writing up our projects and then the Tet offensive came in February of '68 and that basically  
170undermined, you know, it changed so much in terms of what was going on in Vietnam, in terms of  
171American involvement and funding for social science, research of the kind we were doing. It really dried  
172up after that.

173RP: Where did you go from there? Maybe I should ask, from there how did you find yourself in  
174Hawai'i?

175PE: Well, I had finished my masters degree at George Washington during that period, the three-year  
176period I was in Washington. And then I had a friend here at the East-West Center (EWC), my roommate  
177my last year in Redlands had come to Hawai'i in '65 when I went to Washington, D.C. I was ready to go  
178back to school for a Ph.D. and I was into studying language. I had to study a language and so I had an  
179option of going, as I recall, to going to Cornell or to Brown University. And one of the options was  
180Chinese, and the other one, I think at Brown, the other one would have been some Southeast Asian focus  
181course at Cornell. And my friend Gary Larsen said why don't you come out to Hawai'i and take a look  
182at it? And so I did. I came out here in June 1968 and never left (laughs).

183[0:20:57.3]

184RP: So, through the EWC you were involved in several studies as a student.

185PE: I was a student there, yeah. Well, in addition to my own academic research, you may be thinking of  
186the one I participated in a study, participant observation study.

187RP: Yes.

188PE: One of the things at EWC was when they asked students from Asia and the U.S. when they left,  
189what was your favorite experience at the EWC? And many of them would mention the interisland trip,  
190which at Christmas time, the Center would put together groups of about a dozen and send them on  
191excursions around the state for a week or 10 days. And of course, the groups were always mixed up in  
192terms of national backgrounds and so on. And so, these diverse groups would head off and they'd go  
193over to Maui. Our example, we went over to Maui and went to St. Anthony's High School and did a  
194presentation, a little talent show or whatever, talk to the kids for a day in the high school, and then we  
195flew over to the Big Island and started in Kona and—that was the vacation part of it—the intercultural,  
196education part of it was on Maui. But the Big Island was suppose to be fun, although I think we went to

197a couple schools over there as well. But we went and we'd stay in campgrounds and we had to forage  
198together. We had two or three vehicles to travel around in. At points, we had mini-buses, but we'd live in  
199the campground together, we had to go out and buy food and so it was all this shared experience that  
200was curious to the EWC. What was it about that experience gave, that led students to say that was the  
201best experience they had at the EWC? And what it was, I think and what we concluded, was simply this  
202shared decision-making, this working together, solving problems together, and having a relaxing time  
203together. But it was focused also on sharing responsibility and so on. So, for the group to survive you  
204had to make your daily work, your day work out and cook food and eat and all that stuff. So, all that was  
205an insight into what does create consensus and harmony amongst people.

206RP: It sounds like you took some of that into your experience with the model cities program. The Kahili-  
207Palama Project?

208PE: Oh, yes.

209RP: That was a sort of like a community or small-business development focus?

210PE: That was about 1970 or so. I was ... I dropped out of the Ph.D. program for a year to ... I worked  
211as a consultant actually, but I was helping the census track 60 in Kalihi-Palama go through a planning  
212process because the area was going to be, as I recall, the planning was going to change from a purely  
213residential area. There had been creeping ... there was a lot of small business around and so. And so they  
214wanted community participation in evaluating sort of the future of that area in one census track called  
215census track 60. And so there were a number of young people who were hired to be a part of the project,  
216invited to be part of the project. Pete Thompson was one of them. I can't come up with names for others,  
217but they were all young Hawaiian and local leaders that had come through the community college  
218system and were entering the University of Hawai'i and many of them ended up in the Ethnic Studies  
219program there. And they were young leaders and it was great working with them. It gave me more  
220insight into—even though my girlfriend at the time was local and you know I was learning more about  
221local culture and society—working with them and Kalihi-Palama opened my eyes to a lot of things as  
222well.

223RP: I'm reading here in your narrative that you found that community part really challenging, but also  
224enriching to you because, you say here, "I think the Kalihi-Palama experience opened my my mind."  
225And opened you towards, I think it was the environmental movement was strong at the time, and you  
226began to look at other issues to be involved in. Where did Molokai fit in that time of your life?

227[0:26:06.8]

228PE: In about 1970 or so, my recollection it was '69 or '70, I think it was '70, actually, I went with  
229Jaynie, my girlfriend at the time, and now my wife. Went camping over on Molokai, and it was ... I had  
230met a guy through the project, I think, this census track 60 project, who had lived over there. I hadn't  
231been there and so, Jaynie hadn't, so we went camping. We met people over there, while we were there,  
232and one Hawaiian fellow in particular who gave us a ride in his truck and came back in Halawa Valley  
233and picked us up again. And he said, you know, anytime you want to come over you can come over and  
234stay. And so I did go back there on my own several times to get away, because I was not happy with my  
235Ph.D. program. I was not energized, I didn't have the focus that you really need to have at that point in  
236your studies if you're going to push through and get your degree. And I was going to Molokai after that,  
237two or three times a year just to get away from school, get away from Honolulu, and so, and this was  
238April of 1970, the first Earth Day, the beginning, real beginning of the environmental movement. I was  
239very interested in that and reading a lot about it. Of course, I'd traveled through Asia, perfectly aware of  
240all the growing population there, and the pressure of population on the environment globally. So, I  
241reacted very much to the beginning of the environmental dialogue and got involved with that. And the  
242same time I was working in Kalihi-Palama, you know, I learned a lot more local culture and society as  
243well. So, I went back to school after my year of working in Kalihi-Palama, I went back to school and did  
244another three semesters in the Ph.D. program, all the while not being happy with it, but doing it and  
245trying to say, OK, I'm going to finish this, OK? But eventually, my interest in what was happening on

246Molokai . . .

247RP: And what was happening in Molokai that took you so personally?

248PE: Yeah. One day when I was over there visiting my friend, he said take a look at this, what do you  
249think? What it was was the Molokai plan that had been written, I believe, in 1967. It had been put  
250together and it was a plan for the island. And the people that had written the plan, the guy, the five  
251people on the committee, as I recall, one was from Molokai Ranch, one was Puu O Hoku Ranch on the  
252east end, those were the two big ranches. Molokai Ranch owns, what? Thirty-five to forty percent of the  
253island. And Puu O Hoku Ranch is a big ranch on the east end of the island. And the plan called for  
254basically a transformation of the island. They were going to ... the island at that time had a population  
255of about 6,000 people, with a couple of plantation communities at Maunaloa and Koalapu. And it was an  
256agricultural island and what they planned to do was develop this huge urban enclave, this huge urban  
257area down in the West End of the island, which would alone, as I recall, quintuple or sextuple the  
258population of the island, twenty-five or thirty thousand people. And then all along the east– the southern  
259coast of the island, as you went east from Kaunakakai– they have small resort areas planned, apartments,  
260and condos, some small resorts, and so on. So, it was a plan to make the island like Maui (laughs) or  
261Honolulu, and I was aghast at that. I couldn't believe that's really what they planned to do. And I  
262certainly didn't feel that the people I knew wanted to have that happen to the island. And so I was at that  
263time, in the late 1972, I just decided to drop out and move to Molokai and try to help in any way I can  
264with organizing the community.

265RP: What did you do?

266[0:31:04.6]

267PE: Well, Life of the Land was the premier environmental group at that time, and I talked with Sophie  
268Ann Oki about it and Tony Hodges and had a really interesting conversation with Gavin Dawes, who  
269was,  
270still teaching at the university history department at that time. And Gavin was on the board of Life of the  
271Land, had helped get Life of the Land started, and so on. And so I remember talking with Galvin and  
272saying, you know, here's my thought. I'm going to drop out and go over there. He says, I think it's a  
273great idea! (laughs) So, he gave me a lot of encouragement to go do it. And Sofiana was encouraging me  
274as well. So, I dropped out in December of '72 and went out and stayed in Nanakuli with some friends  
275and spent three months, two to three months, just going back and forth between Nanakuli and State Land  
276Use Commission offices. And doing research on what the, you know, the background to all of this  
277because, I should say, not only was there a plan in place that had been developed. See, Molokai is part of  
278Maui County and so the planning, there was a plan that came out of the Maui County system. But the  
279Land Use Commission in 1968 had re-designated this huge chunk of land on the West End for the  
280Kaluakoi Resort. And it was a very large re-designation. In my recollection, it was second in size to the  
281Mililani designation. They created a huge urban area with, suppose to have numerous hotels down along  
282the shoreline, and condos in back of them, and golf courses and homes, all the way up, reaching up the  
283slopes toward Maunaloa. And as I say, for a population of 25,000 people or so, and the idea was, they  
284said, that people would live there and take ferry boats across the channel to work in Honolulu, and it'd  
285be like a bedroom community for people who wanted to work in Honolulu. And then they had ... they  
286had also–the Land Use Commission–had also designated an area, two areas, actually, Pukoo and  
287Puaahala for resort development out in Manae, east from Kaunakakai along the southern shore. And so  
288they had in place the actual, sort of the governmental pieces in place for major development, which  
289would change the island.

290RP: Where did community feedback fit in that?

291PE: Well, there wasn't any... no, there wasn't any. I don't think even my ... I don't recall the specifics  
292of the plan, the Molokai plan that the five guys had created. I know in the re-designation of the Kaluakoi  
293in 1968, they had held a hearing on Molokai, but nobody testified. There was absolutely no public  
294testimony in the file on that. And you know, that was what I was witnessing over there, in going there,

295that there was very little community engagement. It wasn't that there weren't people around that were  
296concerned about it, but there wasn't any organized movement to redress this sort of trend that was  
297underway. And to a large extent, I kind of felt people were colonized, it was like a colony. There was no  
298beach access on the West End. You couldn't go down to the beaches. The [Molokai] Ranch controlled  
299the whole western third of the island, there was no access to the beaches, unless you had permission  
300from the Ranch. You had to be on the good side of the foreman of the Ranch in order to get a permit to  
301go down to the beach. So, the shoreline was cut off from the people. Yeah ... I guess a colony is the way  
302I'd describe it. It was a colonized community.

303[0:35:42.2]

304RP: And so, what did you and your colleagues with Life of Land, what did you actually do to try to  
305change that situation?

306PE: Well, as I said, before I moved over there, I just did a lot of research, and so I studied up on what the  
307situation was on the West End through Land Use Commission files. And I moved over there in March,  
308as I recall of '73. At that time, Life of the Land was already in touch with Sam Peters, Sr. who is— and  
309Sam Peters had what he called Molokai Homesteaders Cooperative Association. He was a homesteader  
310up in Hoolehua and Life of the Land and the Homesteaders Association had gone to court, federal court  
311to stop Molokai Ranch and Kaluakoi from tapping into the irrigation system. And so the initial fight was  
312in court. That was already beginning as I moved over there, the court proceeding. So, when I got to  
313Molokai, I stayed with Bruce and Mary Bowen in Kaunakakai, and just finished that piece of research. I  
314wrote about a 25-page report on what had transpired at the Land Use Commission in 1968 when they  
315had re-designated the West End for development. And it was a horrible decision. They had no  
316transportation study, they had no water study, the issues involving water and transportation had not been  
317resolved at all. The staff at the Land Use Commission recommended against the re-districting just before  
318the decision was made, and then so there were all kinds of ways that you could criticize that decision,  
319given the scope and scale of it and what the impact would have been on the island. And so I wrote that  
320up.

321 And then, you know, on the West End of the island, they had been mining sand off Papohaku Beach  
322since 1959. They were mining sand illegally. This was basically a theft of public sand. They had blasted  
323out Haleolono Harbor in the southwest corner of the island, and dug a big, ah, put in a big culvert along  
324the beach that you could drive a dump truck through. They pulled the sand up off the public part of the  
325beach up onto the culvert and then a truck would drive in through the culvert and they'd open the grate  
326and fill up the sand, the truck with sand. And then the truck would drive over to Haleolono and dump it  
327over the cliff, and then they would load, take front loaders and load it onto a barge and barge the sand  
328across to Honolulu. That started in 1959. And so when I moved over there in '73, they'd been mining  
329sand illegally for 14 years. They also backed tractors down onto the beach, bulldozers, you know, and  
330pushed sand up onto the beach. So, Bruce had tried to stop that, Bruce Bowen, the guy I was living  
331with. He was a schoolteacher that had lived up at Maunaloa and he told this story to me, of course. And  
332he reported how he had written to the Department of Land and Natural Resources and said, you know,  
333this is happening, and please investigate it. And they would send, contact one of their agents over on  
334Maui, and the guy would fly over there. Of course, he'd let them know that he was coming and when he  
335got there he saw nothing illegal. And so the State was complicit in this and didn't do anything about it,  
336despite the fact it was well known. So, we ... I borrowed my ... Jaynie's, my girl friend's father's movie  
337camera and came over to Oahu, got the camera. Went back and Bruce and I put together a plan to break  
338this open somehow.

339[0:40:22.0]

340 We got two rolls of film and I drove Bruce up to Maunaloa and about midnight, when the moon was  
341about three quarters full, and he knew his way around that area very well. He walked down through the  
342pineapple fields, all the way down to the beach and hid in the scrub brush along in back of the beach.  
343And then took those two rolls of film. Showed them coming to work in the morning and operating in a

344public area part of the beach. And so we had film of it. Of course, Bruce had only one eye and he almost  
345actually got caught. The guys came by and he couldn't see out of one eye and this guy walked right  
346close by him in front of him when he was hiding in the bushes. But we had that film. And then we were  
347trying to decide what to do with it because, you know, being ethnic haoles, it wasn't something that was  
348very good for us to have just gone out and done this. There's all politics involved, social politics  
349involved, and what to do with that? So, at that point, it was in July of '73, my mother died. She'd been  
350ill for three years and bedridden with Alzheimer's and a stroke ...and I went back to California. And  
351while I was gone, the film actually had gotten turned over to Tony Hodges, here in Honolulu. And Tony  
352took it with a projector and a gaggle of reports and media people, went to the State Capitol and went into  
353the Attorney General's office and put the film on the projector and showed it to them and said, this is  
354what's happening over there. And the next day in the newspapers banner headlines about the State  
355informed that ...Molokai sand, sand is being stolen. So that broke open that whole operation.  
356Eventually, of course, it was shut down. The State, ah, there were three parties involved. There was  
357Molokai Ranch, B & C Trucking, and Dillingham Transportation was ferrying, barging the sand to  
358Honolulu. Of course, my sense is that most of the development during that whole period, the '60s and up  
359into the early 70's, you know, if you look at all the construction that was taking place in Honolulu at the  
360time, it was a massive increase in just the high-rise construction through the city, State Capitol, you  
361know. So, I think, a lot of that sand went into cement that help build Honolulu in those days.

362[0:43:35.7]

363CB: I've got to change my memory. It'll take about five minutes. It's good see that film, 16mm was used  
364back in those days.

365[0:43:44.6] Snap

366

367Recording #2

368[0:00:08.6] Snap

369CB: So, yeah, where we left off, the 16mm film had just been shown.

370PE: 8 mm

371CB: 8mm!

372PE: It might have been super 8mm (laughs).

373CB: Super 8mm, in the '70s?

374PE: Well, this was the summer of '73 and things were getting tense at that point on Molokai because the  
375sand, jobs were involved in stopping the sand mining. Life of the Land here on Honolulu was in federal  
376court to stop the reef runway. And all of the rocks that bordered the runway, the breakwater rocks on the  
377ocean side of the reef runway, those all came from Molokai. Those rocks were quarried on Molokai and  
378transported. On the way between Kaunakakai and the airport, there was a big quarry on the makai side  
379of the highway, and they quarried those rocks out, hauled them in big trucks down to the wharf, dumped  
380them onto barges, and barged them on to Honolulu, and dumped them into the ocean to build the  
381breakwater All along the ocean side of the reef runway. And that was being since we'd gotten an  
382injunction from the U.S. Supreme Court to stop the construction of the reef runway, the rock mining, the  
383rock quarrying stopped on Molokai as well. So, there were jobs. People lost their jobs at sand mining,  
384they lost their jobs in quarrying the rock. And then when I came back to Molokai in the summer of '73,  
385after I'd gone for my mom's services, I had already started but I really already dug in on researching on  
386the development at Puaahala. That was the resort about 10 miles east of Kaunakakai, along the coast  
387where they were dredging out the reef and filling in a fishpond. This was the same concept they were  
388using at Pukoo, which was a little further out 16 miles, 17 miles out, further up the coast there, where  
389they dredge out a channel and filled a fishpond with the dredged out material. And Pukoo is now a little  
390lagoon because it went belly up. The Developers there failed on their own. And Puaahala was having  
391multiple problems staying financed and so on. And so that had all started in '69, and here it was '73.  
392And it actually started in '68. They had a five-year opportunity to build those two little resorts. When I



393 was researching the Puaahala one, I saw that their permits were all going to expire at the end of '73. The  
394 dredging permit and the whatever other permits they had, they were from Department of Land & Natural  
395 Resources, the [Army] Corp of Engineers, and others. I dug into the files at Department of Land &  
396 Natural Resources. First, they didn't want to let me see the files, and then because we had just hit them  
397 over the head with the sand mining fiasco, they let me see the files. So, I got into the files, there were a  
398 couple files, really thick files. Detailed all the testimony and permits and all the applications and  
399 everything, all the way back from the beginning. I just went through them meticulously. I would guess,  
400 September, October, somewhere in there, I remember coming in, finished reading the files, and I went  
401 out and the land agent's sitting there and he says, "Well, what do you think?" And I said, "Well, they're  
402 operating illegally." And he says, what do you mean, and I say, "Well, you know that they owe the State  
403 money, they haven't paid their bonds. So, you've given them notice, and yet they're operating over  
404 there. They're dredging out the reef, they want to finish everything by the end of November, I mean, end  
405 of December, and you're letting them operate illegally." So, I asked for a meeting with the head of the  
406 Department of Land and Natural Resources, Sunao Kido. So, they gave me the meeting, and I went in  
407 there. It was one of these, kind of odd, funny situations. We're sitting at the big board table where the  
408 board meets, and Suano Kido, and I can't think of the guys name on the other side.  
409 And Kido says, "What do you want? What's your concern?" "Well, these guys operating at Puaahala are  
410 operating illegally, they are in violation of the law." And he turned to his agent, he said, "Yeah, they  
411 haven't paid their bond payments." So, I think it was like two bond payments, worth maybe 70, 80  
412 thousand dollars that they had to pay. And so he says, "What do you want us to do about it?" I said,  
413 "Well, do what's right, you know, shut them down." And the agent got very agitated, he said, "You  
414 know, if we do that, they'll never build this thing. They'll never finish this project." And I said, well ...  
415 So, a day or two later, it was like in the middle of the week, the guy, I got the message over the phone  
416 that they were going to shut them down. And so, OK, Sofie Ann and Tony wanted to put a big press  
417 release, but I said no, no, no, this is too, its getting a little too warm on Molokai right now, because  
418 we've already shut down the sand mining, rocks are not being quarried, you know, quite a few people  
419 are out work. So, lets not create any news over this. I went back to Molokai, in my recollection, I went  
420 back to Molokai after the week, and I went to the Molokai Hotel, Hotel Molokai, and I'm sitting at the  
421 bar having a beer, and this guy who I know, it was in the evening, came in, sat down, we're talking, and  
422 he said, "Boy, those guys are really workin' down there in Puaahala." I said, what do you mean? "Oh,  
423 they're just movin', going around the clock! They got the big floodlights out there." I said, what?! And  
424 he says, yeah. I said they're not supposed to be working, the State shut them down. And he says, "Well,  
425 They're not shut down now, they're working tonight." And so, I got in my car and I drove out there, and  
426 sure enough they were out there in the reef dredging out, a big dredge, a big drill that drilled down into  
427 the reef, and ground up the reef and pumped all the coral up into the fishpond. And they were about ...  
428 Ah, if you fly over there now, if you walk out there on the reef, you can see this rectangular, linear  
429 channel. And they had, I would guess, I don't know, I haven't been out there in a long time, I would  
430 suppose maybe 40, 50 to a 100 yards still to go before they broke out into the open, broke through the  
431 reef all the way out into Kalaeloa Harbor there. So, I was really outraged. The next morning, 8 o'clock I  
432 got on the phone and called the guy at DLNR and said, "You said you were going to shut them down,"  
433 and he says, "We-ell, we gave them notice." And I said, "They're out their working, they were working  
434 last night, ok? The weekend, round-the-clock, they're out there working 24-hours-a-day." And I said, "If  
435 you don't shut them down, you're going to read about it on the front page of the paper the same way you  
436 read about the sand mining." "OK, I'll call 'em again." So, they did shut them down. So, that was, I  
437 think my guess is it was about October, may have been November. In any case, they didn't finish the  
438 whole channel, they had no leverage then to refinance the project, and they would have had to go back  
439 to the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Land and Natural Resources and whatever and get all  
440 those permits all over again because they all expired. And the project never got off the ground after that.  
441 [0:09:35.1]

442And so, that was in late '73, to just continue that thread ... at the same time, you know, I was working,  
443you know, Judy Napoleon was my comrade in arms. Judy and I talked about all this, we were  
444completely on the same wavelength, and we just had to figure out how to mobilize the community. And  
445so I relied on Judy and her judgment for everything. I mean if she said this is what she thought would  
446work, then this is what we thought we could do, you know, then we'd go do it. In terms of getting people  
447together. So, we started inviting people to meetings and talking. And Clara Sabas came, you know,  
448Walter Ritte, we had various, a series of meetings over time. And in 1974, they State Land Use  
449Commission did a five-year boundary review, where they go around and look at the land use boundaries  
450in the State. And so there were two issues on the docket, for the Land Use Commission, on Molokai.  
451One was the big West End development Kaluakoi, and the other was Puaahala, the one I was just  
452describing. We were able to organize a very good community effort on Puaahala. There were not many  
453people that wanted to testify on the West End. The West End was really sort of off the charts for them, it  
454was too big. But on Puaahala, in my recollection, we had 14 people came in and testified against the  
455project and said the State, the Land Use Commission ought to down-zone it, take away their urban  
456zoning, and the area had been zoned, districted rather, from agriculture and conservation into urban. And  
457we said, you know, take it back! They haven't performed, they've ruined the area, they've sent silt all  
458down the coastline from the dredging. And it worked. And the decision, which came out then, I believe it  
459was late '74 or early '75, they down-districted Puaahala back to conservation and agriculture. They  
460completely wiped out their right to develop that as a, within the urban district. So, that was a huge, huge  
461victory for the community. And I remember Walter saying, "I never thought I would win anything." And  
462there was a big kick-start. And then at the West End, they actually about half of the district, urban  
463district, they shrunk the urban area down to roughly half, I think. The issues went on with the West End,  
464'cause they were still trying to get access to the water. They didn't take away the area right along the  
465beach, so the whole idea of building hotels down there and golf courses, and so, are still intact. But that  
466Puaahala decision gave the energy to the leaders in the community who wanted to fight for their island  
467to keep going. It was a big decision, and after that, early '75 Emmett Aluli moved over to Molokai and  
468that group just gained more energy. In July of '75, it sort of climaxed in this march on the West End  
469from Moomomi Beach down to the west, and across Molokai Ranch, and down to the West End beach,  
470trying to think of the cove there, Kawakiu was the name of that, can't remember now.

471RP: You were there in the march.

472PE: Yeah, yeah. Some background to that. One time, talking with Tony— I used to fly back and forth  
473from Molokai to Oahu, 'cause I had research to do over there people to talk to, and so I remember  
474talking to Tony one time and he says, "Isn't there a trail or something down there, you know, where you  
475could march across Molokai Ranch land?" Tony was really good at this stuff, he was a master at  
476thinking of things like this. And so I had gone to the State office that has all those maps from historical  
477times, right? I think its part of DLNR. I can't remember what agency it is now. It used to be at the corner  
478of King and Punchbowl, there. The Territorial Building, I think it was called. I found this map, which  
479was a map from about 1890's or so that showed a trail, a Hawaiian trail across the West End of Molokai.  
480And I had a copy made of it. I took it back to Molokai. And so, I'd had that map for, I don't know, since  
481early '74, maybe even late '73. I had it for a long time, because I remember showing it to somebody, this  
482guy, must have been '73 then. Because that's where I was living at that time. I never really had anybody  
483pick up on it. But in early '75, after the Puaahala decision, and this group was starting to coalesce, and it  
484was really this energy from winning one, winning on Puaahala, I passed on the map. Walter, Emmett  
485then they just seized on that so that they were going to do this march. And so from January '75 through  
486up to July, the march was on July 4<sup>th</sup> of '75, there was all this energy devoted to planning this march and  
487it was a great march. It was incredible. There was a helicopter overhead filming it, one of the news  
488stations had a helicopter, and media came. Ed Tanji came from the Advertiser, Honolulu Advertiser, he  
489was a correspondent on Maui who did a lot of reporting of things on Molokai, and he came over. Mac  
490Poepoe and Walter and all these guys marched down to the beach, it was a big group. A lot of the kupuna

491drove down, met us down there. And of course, the Ranch didn't, I mean, we had a lot of kupuna  
492involved at this point, too. So the whole group had grown and really coalesced. The Ranch had no  
493interest at all in trying to stop that, and basically said, yeah, you can go ahead and do this. So, it was  
494really a very pivotal event. The guys who came together on that then later, you know, George Helm,  
495George wasn't involved with that at that time, but when I left in September of '75, there was a big  
496concert down at Queen Liliuokalani trust area there. George was there and a number of other Hawaiian  
497entertainers and the whole thing sort of took off at that point. From then on they went over to  
498Kaho'olawe. And so my memory of sort of the key points during those years.

499[0:18:08.9]

500RP: Pivotal, it really was.

501CB: And so you went from being a history major, to going to Molokai, and obviously just seeing that  
502things were being done wrong, and that's what I guess... when you see the unfairness of it, somebody  
503has to do something, right?

504PE: Well, it was a very unjust reality there. And you know, if you, as I say, people couldn't go to the  
505beach, you couldn't go to the West End beaches, it was the place was controlled. Land was controlled.  
506The social movement was controlled.

507CB: People were afraid.

508PE: People were afraid to take on the Ranch.

509CB: People would walk away, well, you didn't. Well, why didn't you just say, I'm not from Molokai.  
510But you moved there . . . to make a difference. Do you think you were just young at the time, had a,  
511needed a project ...

512PE: (laughter) Needed something to do?

513CB: I don't think so, you saw a community need.

514RP: Well, you stayed there until 1975, and then you moved.

515PE: Yeah, Jaynie, my girlfriend (laughs)... when I moved to Molokai, she said, "Well, I'm not going to  
516Molokai." She went to Japan, she teaches English to foreign students, English as a second language. So,  
517she went to Osaka and taught there for two years. She actually came back in the middle of that and then  
518went back for a second year. So, in the fall of '75, I was ready to leave Molokai, maybe not permanently,  
519I didn't think I was leaving permanently. I just wanted to get away for a while because this whole thing  
520had grown. Personally, when I look back at that I felt some like being left out, in a way, because it had  
521become a Hawaiian movement, it had become a local movement. And that was OK, it was great, but  
522there was a, its what I feel now, you know, you get to a point where my role isn't the same anymore.  
523And so, everything was going, it was moving, and I just said I'm going to go off. I was going to go to  
524Japan for three months and hang out with Jaynie, and go traveling around.

525RP: Did you?

526PE: Oh, yeah! I went and didn't come back for two years! (laughs)

527CB: You made a difference ....

528RP: The baby grew up!

529CB: And had its own life.

530PE: Well, the dynamic leadership that came, that emerged at that point. You know, I can't do justice to it,  
531mention everybody who was involved, you know. But I can't think of everybody's names. But Judy was  
532to me the one who was my rock, the person I relied on. But Walter Ritte came on and Emmett was there,  
533and Harry James Mowat, and his brother and his wife, um, and of course, George Helm, ah, he wasn't  
534(they weren't) involved too much, but I was going to say, Adolph Helm. And it just had a life of its own  
535at that point, it just took off.

536RP: From basically nothing to something, a big something.

537PE: From very little to a big something, yeah right.

538CB: Networking apparently, giving each other the support that's needed, no single person...

539PE: The underlying principal for me throughout all that was simply to empower people to be, to do for

540themselves, to take power and to play a role. And so empowering people to do that was really the key  
541principle, right? And so I went off to Japan and we traveled backpacked through Japan and Korea and  
542then went down to Southeast Asia for seven months, and we were broke at that point in the summer or  
543spring of '76 we went back to Japan. She went to Osaka to work, I stayed in Tokyo to work, lived with  
544an old college friend. We earned money for a year and then came back, and eventually settled down in  
545Hawai'i in '78.

546RP: 1978. But that wasn't the end of your community organizing because where did Save Sandy Beach,  
547and there was another organization ... Livable Hawai'i Kai Hui? They name you as a mentor. That was a  
548non-profit organization. When did those events occur? After you came back from Japan?

549[0:23:51.5]

550PE: Yeah. We came back and settled in Hawai'i, and in early '78, we got married in October '78. And in  
551that election of that year, Jean King was elected Lt. Governor. I had gotten to know Jean when I was  
552living in Molokai because I'd come over to Honolulu to try to get things done in the legislature or  
553whatever that would have helped us out and Jean was the premier environmental politician at that time.  
554She was a State senator. And she ran for Lt. Governor in '78 and was elected. I was fortunate to be hired  
555by her in '79, so I worked for from '78 to '82 as one of her researchers. It was a great job because not  
556only Jean was a great politician, great person, you know? True to her values. But she gave me, she was  
557very interested in supporting diversified agriculture because the plantations, pineapple and sugar, were  
558shutting down one after another. Agriculture was a big concern of hers, so I got to be on the agriculture,  
559sit with the agriculture, Governor's agriculture coordinating committee, travel around the state, look at  
560agricultural projects, and so on. Learned a lot, got to see more of the state, and also she asked me to  
561coordinate her visits to Molokai. So I got to go back to Molokai frequently enough. So... I lost the  
562thread there, we were talking about agriculture.

563CB: Future projects, and anything you learned from before that you applied.

564PE: Well, I was able to stay in touch with a lot of activist friends, you know, through that job. And then  
565she ran for governor in '82 and lost. I then went to work for Welcome Fawcett, who had been elected in  
566that election to the city council. Welcome was another wonderful politician, wonderful person who had  
567again very strong conservation values, and just ethics of the highest order. And so I was her chief-of-  
568staff for four years. Got to see the city council, the workings of the city up close, and during that period,  
569'84, '85, '84 Jaynie and I moved out to Hawai'i Kai and so I was now living in Hawai'i Kai. In any case,  
570during one period there when the city council—there were three members of the— in those days, you were  
571partisan, it was a partisan council, you had Democrats and Republicans running for office, now its non-  
572partisan, but in those days it wasn't. And three of the Democrats switched parties and went over to Frank  
573Fasi's side. Frank had run again for office in '84 and re-elected Mayor. So, the leadership of the council  
574switched. They fired the senior advisor of each of the four, five majority council members, took away  
575the senior staff person for the minority members (laughs), so I lost my job for six months, until Patsy  
576Mink organized the recall for those three guys. And leadership of the council switched back again. But  
577during that period I was unemployed for about six months and during that time Frank Fasi had brought  
578in Andy Anderson as his managing director. And Andy had basically thrown open the doors to the  
579developers and bring us your proposals, because the previous administration, Eileen Anderson had been  
580pretty tough about development, and so on. It was now a reversal of, in a way in saying, bring us your  
581proposals, let's see what you got! So out in the Queen's Beach area, Sandy Beach area, which Queen's  
582Beach had been designated by the Land Use Commission as a urban area, and the city had designated it  
583as a resort area on their plans. In the late '70s, early '80s, the community had risen up and fought that  
584whole resort idea, and the city council had finally capitulated on it, and said OK there won't be a resort  
585there. This was like '81. '82. So, people kind of relaxed on it, but sure enough in '84, '85, then Andy  
586Anderson says bring us your proposals. Kaiser Development comes back in with a revised, smaller  
587scaled-down resort proposal for the Queen's Beach area.

588[0:29:08.8]

589And so, by that time I was living in Hawai'i Kai and had been working for Welcome, and so, in any  
590case, I helped organize the community opposition to that in '85. And the opposition was very strong.  
591People in Hawai'i Kai don't want to see a resort there, didn't want to. And Andy Anderson and others  
592recognized it and they know...(laughs)

593RP: No argument.

594PE: Yeah, yeah, they just said, Kaiser withdrew their proposal. So, the community at that point beat back  
595the resort proposal one more time. But then in '87, they came back with this housing project along  
596Sandy Beach coastline. That was the beginning of the Sandy Beach fight.

597RP: Did you stick with that through the end?

598PE: Yeah, well, I was, yeah... I had been working for Welcome when this idea had been brought to the  
599council and I didn't pay a lot of attention to it, I didn't, there wasn't a big opposition to it at the time. It  
600didn't rise to the level of a major struggle, right? Welcome was... so it started moving through the  
601council process, the city's approval process. What it was, was a proposal to put houses on the mauka  
602side of the highway, across from Sandy Beach and towards the big curve in the highway there, towards  
603Makapuu. They put them on a ten-foot high berm, and they already had a berm built, there were two big  
604parcels of land along the highway. And on one of them the berm was already there. And the houses  
605would be sitting up above, you know, looking down at the beach. Anyway, beginning of '87 I was out of  
606a job, Welcome had been defeated. And this came to the council for final approval. And what they were  
607asking for was approval of a Special Management Area use permit to built within a Special Management  
608Area. The public had gotten agitate about it, and David Matthews, who I had met a year or two earlier on  
609the Queen's Beach thing, said, "Phil, why don't you get involved in this." I said, "Well, I don't have a  
610job, I'm looking for work." And he says, "Well, you gotta do this," and he prevailed on me to get  
611involved in some way. So, I went down to the blowhole lookout there, and I just sort of studied the  
612beach along there, tried to imagine what an impact it would have. And it, yeah, it would have had a huge  
613impact, you know, so I conceded that, and started getting interested in it. And then in April were the two  
614big hearings. And these were big, showdown hearings in the city council. One about the 1st and the  
615other about 15<sup>th</sup> of April. All kinds of people came out to testify. There were ILWU and Local 5, the  
616hotel workers testified against it. There were tourism operators that testified against it. There were artists  
617came down and put their paintings up on the gallery there, and they testified against it 'cause it's one of  
618the great landscapes on Oahu and the last remaining open space shoreline that you can drive along of  
619that scenic quality and accessible shoreline. There was this huge outpouring of public testimony, League  
620of Women Voters, I think, Astrid Monson came down, American Association of University Women, just  
621a cross-section of the community. I testified against it. Others who I'd gotten to know on Queen's Beach  
622testified. So, it was a very intense period. Marilyn Bornhorst was against it, Gary Gill was against it, so  
623we had good allies on the council. And it was very intense, and I sat there in the audience I'm thinking,  
624looking at all this, and I was trying to think, you know, am I gonna really get involved in this? Because I  
625didn't have a job (laughs). I thought, this is really going to be easy to organize, because there's such  
626strong feeling about it, all you gotta do is bring people together, and figure out what it is you wanna do.  
627And so ultimately, I decided do that and right after the decision, I think it was on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, we  
628went over to the Columbia Inn, a group of us, Marilyn was there, Dave Matthews, Mike Wilson, and  
629some others, and sat there, we're talking about, OK, what can we do? An initiative had come up, using  
630initiative, to overturn this decision. And so, that there began, from there forward it was just intense for  
631five years. I don't know, that's a big story.

632CB: What year was that?

633PE: '87.

634CB: Well, Jean Aoki said that she started getting very involved with initiative and referendum at a  
635certain point, but I thought it was a little earlier than that.

636PE: Yeah, it was the date, probably the date [of the] La'au initiative, which was in '84, yeah. I'll try to  
637tell a story. Ah, we ...

638RP: Are you comfortable? Do you want to take a little break?

639PE: Naw, I'm OK. Just switching gears from Molokai, now we refer to Molokai, *Moloka'i*, which we

640didn't in those days. But uh, switching from that to Sandy Beach is like a mental shift here, but...

641CB: .... you shared with us, the decision you made, "Yes, I'm going to get involved."

642PE: Well, why don't we take a short break. And then I'll get a little second breath here.

643[0:36:00.3] End of Recording #2

644Recording #3

645[0:00:10.3] Snap

646PE: OK, so in the spring of '87, we held a ... I started with a big meeting in Hawaii Kai, invited the  
647whole community to come to the meeting, and of course, we had already figured out what we needed to  
648do. We figured we needed to three things. One was we needed to organize to fight, to launch a law suit  
649of our own. Secondly, we needed to start the initiative process, and thirdly, we needed to engage in long-  
650range planning or in-depth planning for that entire coastline. So, we immediately organized the Sandy  
651Beach Defense Fund to file a lawsuit to invalidate the permit that the city council had just given. That  
652court proceeding went on for a year and a half, I would say. And the point of that was to slow the whole  
653thing down to slow the development down so that they wouldn't turn any dirt, turn any earth and make  
654progress, you know. And the second thing was to launch the initiative and so, you know, we tracked  
655down the Date-La'au, a copy of the Date-La'au petition. And on the basis of that we designed our own  
656petition, initiative petition for signatures and launched that process, and started collecting signatures  
657from about May or June or so of '87. And then we also set up a group, a committee, made up of people  
658like Marion Kelly and other people at the university, and people in the community, Maivan Lum, who  
659was a young law professor to look into the the business of just locking up that whole shoreline and  
660keeping it open, so we wouldn't have to keep fighting these battles, coming back and doing these battles.  
661And so that stream eventually ended up at the legislature, we got an appropriation out of the legislature  
662to do a study, a plan or study, of that whole coastline. That laid the groundwork for subsequent actions  
663by the city, the state rather, to get control of Queen's Beach. They eventually bought the Queen's Beach  
664property from Bishop Estate. So, those three things were the threads that we pursued and we were very  
665... we had an incredible group. We had so much talent in that group. We had writers, we had attorneys,  
666we had planners, we had a lot of people in government that supported us, in both the city and the state.  
667And by comparison, I was just saying, you know, looking at the Sandy Beach effort as an organizing  
668challenge, it was much easier in my mind, from the way I approach it, than Moloka'i was. Because  
669Moloka'i was a challenge of, you know, where there wasn't already that kind of mobilized human  
670capacity, human talent ... the talent was there, but it wasn't readily—didn't coalesce immediately. But at  
671Sandy Beach, it was like that [snaps fingers], like we just had to have repeated meetings, get our act  
672together, and do it. And that's what we did. That whole story of the lawsuit, the initiative, the lawsuits  
673that went to the Supreme Court in both cases, the election of '88 that we won. Two won. We beat the  
674biggest landowner in the state, one of the biggest developers in the state, with a grassroots effort. They  
675had lots of money, they spent \$10,000 a day in the last 30 days of the campaign before the election. We  
676were a grassroots effort that made our own commercials, radio, and TV. We had great freelance writers  
677that produced material and we did press releases. We did picket lines, we did everything. So that ... we  
678won the election, but then we lost the battle. The Supreme Court invalidated the initiative, and after that  
679for three years, we went to the legislature to try to restore the right to have an initiative for land use  
680issues, which the Supreme Court took away from us in that decision. So and we never got it back. Today,  
681there is no right to make land use decisions by initiative and referendum in the state of Hawai'i, despite  
682the fact it's in the Kaua'i County Charter. It's in the county charter of all four counties, but you can't  
683implement it because the developer could go to court and invalidate it.

684CB: Because the state law is predominate.

685[0:05:10.3]

686PE: Yeah. State law ... gives the right to the counties to make land use decisions within their county.

687And the way the Supreme Court interpreted that law is it says it gives the right to the city and county  
688councils, exclusively. Not to the public through initiative and referendum. The only way you can ... the  
689draft legislation is still there. We fought for three years in the legislature, 1990, '91, '92, to restore, to  
690amend state law to make it clear that land use decisions could be made by initiative and referendum as  
691had already been done on Kaua'i twice, had been on O'ahu twice, had been done on the Big Island once.  
692And the public had put it in its county charters by vote. We were unsuccessful and folded our tents in  
6931993 after five intense years of committed struggle.

694RP: Much was learned and gained from that, I would say, despite the fact that in the end you had to just  
695fold up your tents.

696PE: Well, sure.

697RP: They went on to ...Livable Hawai'i Kai Hui?

698PE: Yeah, well the struggle ... when we came to the point where we decided everybody was exhausted  
699and they had given a lot of themselves and their families and everything we just couldn't continue with  
700the same intensity. We said, look go out and do in the community what you can do. I mean, everybody,  
701go out and just continue to do whatever you can on whatever issues that you can. But that's Queen's  
702Beach effort, Sandy Beach effort, now the Ka Iwi effort it became, because that's the Ka Iwi channel  
703there. So that was the Ka Iwi coastline. And so, it continued because the lawsuits over the Sandy Beach  
704effort had still not been resolved. The property at Queen's Beach still had not been incorporated into the  
705public domain, it was still owned by Bishop Estate. So, that effort to get funding, to get funds to get  
706Governor Cayetano behind it to acquire the Queen's Beach area for the State, that effort continued  
707during the '90s. It succeeded. So, that property now is safely in State hands. It's been put back into the  
708conservation district by the Land Use Commission. There's still property on the mauka side of the  
709highway, across from Queen's Beach that is...the land owners and developers are talking about putting  
710cabins up there and cluttering the hills and mountains with buildings. And the property at Sandy Beach,  
711which involved the City, eventually the City acquired ownership of it as well after a lengthy lawsuit by  
712the developers. All of that property pretty much along the Ka Iwi coastline is now in public hands.

713RP: Now that's success.

714PE: Yes, that was a big success. It took ...you know, if you go back to Queen's Beach, beginning of the  
715Queen's Beach struggle, which would have been about 1980, late '70s, 80's, so that took, you know, 30  
716to 35 year period there before everything gets wrapped up. And as I say, still not over, in terms of the  
717mauka side of the highway across from Queen's Beach. And that's where the Ka Iwi Coalition, the  
718Hawaii Kai Hui, they're the legacy organization, they're continuing the struggle. Elizabeth Reilly is  
719leading them. They have good leadership, they're persistent, and they carry it on.

720CB: Well, that seems to be a thread, it's that many of the things that you begin with, somebody else is  
721carrying it on. It's not like over. On Moloka'i, others carried it on. Seems that that occurs and another  
722issue I see is persistence, not giving up.

723PE: The point of organizing is to create, to empower people to play that role in the community. And the  
724struggles in Hawai'i over land and water and shoreline are long-term. I don't ever see them going away  
725because this is prized terrain on the face of the earth. People who stand to make large amounts of money  
726off of it, or people who have a lot of money and who want to live in this wonderful place, will use  
727whatever power or clout they have to get their way. So, I think the struggles over land and water and  
728shoreline and so on are just going to go on forever. But if you have an involved community, at least the  
729community has some say, and that's the whole point of organizing as to create leadership, create  
730empowered citizenry. That's what you have to put your faith in.

731(0:11:24.5)

732RP: I had asked the question earlier, what you felt personally were the key ingredients in community  
733organizing, or if some single person such as yourself, an individual, wanted to step out and begin  
734coalescing a group. What do you feel are the key ingredients here in Hawai'i that you've seen or  
735experienced yourself?

736PE: Well, I think first you have to be a good listener. You have to really, if you're not a good listener  
737already, you have to learn how to become one. And you have to be patient. You have to put up with all  
738kinds of people who have opinions and positions, and you ... have to reserve judgment and not be quick  
739to judge. And you have to be persistent and committed. You have to keep going back to be with that  
740group of involved people who, where ever they are, or whoever they are. And it doesn't always work  
741out. It doesn't work out every time. Sometimes, there's not the right mix of people, the right mix of  
742leadership. I think probably, listening, you know, that's key.

743RP: Listening is key.

744PE: Absolutely key.

745RP: I think you had a few experiences in your past ...the Carl Rogers program, La Jolla, you learned a  
746lot about listening there. You thought you were a pretty good listener and then you went to this program.

747PE: Yeah, that was very key in my own experience. Around 1970, when I was a graduate student, I had  
748been ...ah, my mother was very ill and my parents were going through this. It was a transition in her life  
749as she fell into Alzheimer's and had a heavy, massive stroke... and I just needed somebody to talk to. I  
750went to the counseling center and I think somewhere along the line there, I came across this  
751advertisement or something for these summer institutes in La Jolla, started by Carl Rogers. Of course,  
752his clients-centered style of therapy, you let out whatever it is you're feeling and so on and communicate  
753it. Some people called it "encounter groups," whatever, but it was just being in a group, and so I did that  
754one summer. Then they invited me to come back a second summer and be a facilitator for that. And  
755those summers really had a big impact on me because I really learned a lot to do with my own feelings,  
756but also to be with other people who were sharing their feelings and to just be with them. Let them go on  
757and experience what was happening. And so listening, you learn to listen in the course of that, and I  
758don't think, looking back I could have been as... that my involvement Moloka'i would have been as  
759fruitful, if I hadn't had those experiences. Because it really enabled me in a way to be with people who  
760were not my culture, you know? It wasn't where I was from, but I was able to be with them and to learn  
761from them, and actually, work with them, and become colleagues and friends and to work together on  
762common goals. So, I think that actually, the Carl Rogers experience was really important to me, yeah.

763CB: Glad you trusted yourself.

764PE: That's right, that's right ... yeah.

765CB: Is there any question that we forgot to ask you, that you were hoping we would ask today?

766PE: Ah, no, I can't think of anything. I think that what's been interesting to me, actually, today is, I  
767mentioned last week this hour and a half talking to a university group about the Sandy Beach  
768experience, which was incredibly pre-occupying. And looking back, one of the older graduate students  
769in the class said, "You know, we'd been looking through all this stuff and we wondered when did you  
770guys every sleep?" (laughter) We were so involved and so productive, we had such a presence in the  
771community, but the thing that we did today was my own experiences but it was the precursor to that,  
772which was really the Moloka'i experience. And that was far more challenging and creative for me, in a  
773way, than the Sandy Beach experience. Sandy Beach, by the time, Sandy Beach came along, ah ...

774RP: You had troops!

775PE: I had a ton, there were everybody, we had so much talent to work, it was just a matter of sitting and  
776hammering it out. Of course, it was key elements of listening and being patient and all that, were still  
777critical. But with Moloka'i it was a very challenging and very, very creative thing to go through, and ...

778RP: Definitely had its hardships.

779PE: Yeah, it was of a different order. And it was earlier (laughs).

780CB: First time you did anything.

781PE: Yeah.

782CB: You were break new ground.

783PE: Yeah.

784RP: And so these days, we can find you still at the East-West Center?



785PE: Yeah.

786RP: This time you are an instructor, teacher?

787PE: No, no. I help ... I'm on the administrative side. I help develop projects at the Center. So, I travel a lot to Asia, and I work with partners in Asia, both individuals and organizations and develop research and education training projects, and so on, together. But it involves in many ways the same set of skills and utilizing the same, you know, experience that I've had in terms of working and organizing with community groups, and so on.

792CB: For the Movers and Shakers of the future, besides being a good listener, is there any other message you want to encourage ... young people, people of all ages. Well, Jean Aoki really didn't getting involved until she retired from teach.

795PE: Really.

796CB: She saw where she could make a difference.

797PE: Well, that's a good point, because I think that sure, trusting yourself and what you've learned, regardless of where you are in your life, and playing a role, trusting yourself, what you've got to offer is worth something and valuable, you know? It's a big part of getting engaged. I think, having faith in people and understanding that the only thing that keeps you from working together with someone is you haven't reached out and closed the gap between you and them, you know? Just having that faith that there are good people out there with good values and that you can find common ground with is part of the basic understanding you have to acknowledge if you're going to play a role. And there's plenty of opportunities to do it, I mean there's needs all over the community. Whether it's fighting land use battles or helping overcome poverty or mental illness in the community, whatever it is. So, I would just urge people to just go for it. I think we all hold ourselves back in some degree, our talents are far richer than we give ourselves credit for or that we try to utilize. Dig, reach down, grab it and go for it.

808RP: Thank you, Phil.

809PE: Thank you.

810RP: Thank you so much for your time, it's been a real pleasure.

811PE: Thank you, this has been delightful, I really enjoyed talking with you, yeah! Thank you for doing this project.

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814[0:21:37.5] Snap

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